



United States Air Force

ONLINE news

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NEWSBYTES

Officer to attend presidential address

A captain decorated for his involvement in a rescue mission during Operation Allied Force will be the sole military guest of the President and the First Lady at the State of the Union Address Jan. 27.

Capt. John A. Cherrey, assigned to the 81st Fighter Squadron, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, was awarded the Silver Star for his actions as combat search and rescue mission commander in the recovery of a downed pilot near Novi Sad, Serbia, March 27-28.

SRB review completed

The Air Force has completed its semi-annual selective reenlistment bonus program review, with 28 specialties added, 34 careers fields increased, nine career fields decreased and four removed from the SRB list.

The additions and increases took effect Jan. 13, while the decreases and removals become effective Feb. 19. For more information about the SRB program, contact the base military personnel flight.

C-130s start medevac

C-130s will now routinely fly actual versus training aeromedical evacuation missions. The change took effect Jan. 22.

The majority of strategic AE missions are performed by C-141s. However, as the C-141 fleet retires and their number dwindles, Air Mobility Command considered new options to perform the vital missions.

The 911th Airlift Wing, Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pa., and the 187th AW, F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., will perform AE missions.

AF releases survey results

WASHINGTON — The 1999 Chief of Staff's survey reveals strides continue to be made in job satisfaction, teamwork and quality of life issues compared to 1997 results. However, dissatisfaction is still evident in several areas including pay, operations tempo and supervision.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan received the results of the survey, which measured the service's organizational climate and quality of life, Jan. 21. More than 190,000 responded (36 percent of the Air Force population).

The organizational climate section addressed 13 key unit level factors ranging from leadership to unit resources.

Overall results of the survey varied little from 1997. Job satisfaction remained consistent at 90 percent. Unit performance outcomes, teamwork, core values, job enhancement, and training and development were in the 80 to 84



A weapons load crew prepares to attach an AGM-65 Maverick missile to the wing of an A-10 Thunderbolt II, April 12, 1999. Airmen across the Air Force offered input for the CSAF Survey and the results reflected their opinions.

percent satisfaction range. General satisfaction, unit flexibility, recognition and unit resources remained nearly constant in the 66 to 79 percent

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Report: pilot lost sight of aircraft

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. — Officials investigating the Aug. 19 mid-air collision of two Missouri Air National Guard F-15A aircraft near Salem, Mo., have determined the accident occurred when one of the pilots lost sight of the other's position during a training mission.

Captain Richard W. Wedan ejected from his aircraft and sustained only minor injuries. His aircraft was completely destroyed when it crashed in a remote, wooded area southeast of Salem. Major Brian J. Kamp, who was piloting the other F-15, was able to safely land at Lambert Field and was not injured in the accident.

Captain Wedan was assigned to the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field, Ore., while Major Kamp was assigned to the 131st Fighter Wing of the Missouri Air National Guard.

According to the Accident Investigation Board report released Jan. 21 by Air Combat Command, the primary cause of the accident was Captain Wedan's failure to adhere to standard procedures when he lost sight of his opponent during air-to-air training.

Investigators also determined that a contributing factor was Major Kamp's maneuvering without an accurate assessment of Captain Wedan's flight path.

When the two aircraft collided, the left external fuel tank of Major Kamp's aircraft impacted the canopy of Captain Wedan's aircraft, shattering it. Following the collision, the captain sensed no response from his flight controls and ejected several seconds later. He was rescued by a Missouri Highway Patrol helicopter and transported to Fort Leonard Wood Hospital.



Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

Emblem way to go

I read the article about the Air Force trying to come up with an identity and agree whole-heartedly that we need one. With no distinctive emblem that the world can recognize, beyond the AF seal, it is hard to see past our own wing's mission. Whether it be the stars, the stripes, our function badges or our unit's shield, we seem to always be looking for ways to identify ourselves. The concept of an official Air Force symbol is the way to go. The one displayed encompasses a lot of key ideas. The only thing that seems to be missing, in my opinion, is the head of this eagle figure. I think an official symbol and a clear identity are the best ways to tell the world that the Air Force leads the way.

Senior Airman James Smith
Malmstrom AFB, Mont.

No need for new logo

I can't believe the Air Force is designing a new logo. This reminds me of [former CSAF] Gen. McPeak's new uniform idea. First we'll design a new logo that has no history or heritage, then we'll spend millions of dollars advertising it and changing letterhead, manuals, uniform buttons, etc. Because of how ludicrous the whole idea is, the next chief of staff will probably have us revert back to the current Hap Arnold emblem that represents our heritage dating back to the Army Air Corp ... Change for change's sake is not good. I can't believe

we've already wasted \$675,000 on this effort.

Richard M. LaRiviere
Minot AFB, N.D.

Who we are

Regarding the Air Force identity article in the Jan. 24 edition of Air Force Times, defense officials said, "Airmen don't really know what the Air Force is all about." Do defense officials believe by giving us a fancy little logo made by a New York design firm, that we are going to instantaneously know who we are? Perhaps airmen are suffering an identity crisis because every time we turn around our leaders are changing something else ... We need to realize our heritage is great, too. Stop trying to create a false AF, and focus on where we came from and where we are going without trying to separate us from our past ...

Senior Airman Greg Volkman
USAF Academy, Colo.

AF design looks good

I am writing in regard to the article about changing the Air Force symbol ["A single compelling theme," Jan. 19]. I like the design and I think it is something we should definitely go forward with.

Airman 1st Class Scott McClintock
Lackland AFB, Texas

CMSAF addresses BAH reform concerns

By Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Jim Finch

From time to time, issues come up that seem to ripple through the force creating some anxiety. When pay table reform was announced several months ago, many people became emotionally charged because they misunderstood the intent of the overall reform or relied on anecdotal explanations floating around that often twisted information out of context. However, the issue died down considerably once we were able to get the facts out and explain the direction we were headed.

This month, the Department of Defense announced changes to the basic allowance for housing rates, and some have taken exception to the new rates. Now, I realize we could have avoided a few concerns had we done a better job of sending out more information about the changes before they took effect. I assure you we will continue to work on the process of getting you "up front" information on changes impacting you. For now, I want to make sure you are armed with some very important facts concerning the changes to BAH.

First, the changes in the BAH table are designed to provide a housing allowance that helps even the "out-of-pocket" expenses you and your peers pay regardless of where you are assigned. As you

may recall, the former basic allowance for quarters (BAQ) program favored those assigned to low-cost areas around the country at the expense of those located in high-cost areas. This meant adequate housing was extremely difficult to find for airmen at many locations. Also, for years I received complaints from many of you that the

variable housing allowance (VHA) system was broken. You didn't know what your rate would be from year to year and believed VHA favored more senior people who had additional discretionary income. BAH addresses both of these concerns.

Second, if you review the complete BAH table, you will find the rates dropped for some locations and increased for others. These new BAH rates were determined by a private firm and then independently confirmed using a number of sources. It's important to realize the rates are based only on rental costs for a standard of housing listed for each pay grade. As a side note, we are also

reviewing the housing standards BAH uses.

Third, those of you in areas where BAH declined are now rate protected...unlike in the former BAQ/VHA program. This means you

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I assure you we will continue to work on the process of getting you "up front" information on changes impacting you.

CMSAF Finch



Pulling Together

Community approach sends Air Force suicides on the decline

By Leigh Anne Redovian

USAF Surgeon General Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — With its community approach to suicide prevention, the Air Force is seeing a steady decline in its suicide rates.

But instead of resting on their laurels, Air Force Surgeon General, Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Paul Carlton and members of his Suicide Integrated Product Team are saying one suicide is one too many.

The team is combating suicide rates by instilling in every Air Force member that suicide prevention is a community problem.

"We have to stop thinking of suicide prevention as something only mental health professionals do," General Carlton said. "All of us have a responsibility to our fellow airman and co-workers. Recognizing when a person is having problems and actively encouraging that person to seek help is a vital part of suicide prevention."

The Air Force measures suicide rates per every 100,000 people. In 1999 the rate was approximately 5.6, down from 12.4 in 1996. As of Dec. 13, there were 19 suicides in the Air Force, which the general said is too many.

"We still lose too many airmen to suicide in the Air Force, and it is preventable," he said. "We cannot stop and declare victory but instead we need to continue our efforts."

Today, the Air Force is using an integrated delivery system that includes chaplains and professionals from mental health, family support, child and youth services, health and wellness centers and family advocacy - all working together and taking responsibility for prevention. To date, suicide prevention efforts include an emphasis on involving and training leadership, annual suicide prevention training for all military and civilians and a database that tracks not only suicides but also suicide attempts.

According to Lt. Col. Wayne Talcott, who leads the Air Force's suicide prevention team, raising suicide awareness is not enough.

"Our pilots are responsible for [detecting] early signs of problems with their jet engines, so mechanics can intervene before engine failure occurs," Colonel Talcott said. "In the same way, we expect our commanders, first sergeants and supervisors at every



Suicide warning signs

The following warning signs may signal suicide intent:

- Preoccupied with death and dying
- Talk about committing suicide
- Make final arrangements for death
- Trouble eating or sleeping
- Drastic changes in behavior
- Withdrawal from friends or social activities
- Loss of interest in work, school, etc.
- Give away prized possessions
- Take unnecessary risks

- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs

For more information on what to do if you encounter someone with these signs, contact a member of your base integrated delivery system, which includes your chaplain's office, Family Support Center, Behavioral Health Clinic, Family Advocacy, Substance Abuse and Health & Wellness Center (HAWC).

level to be responsible for their co-workers and watch for early signs of problems so we can intervene early."

The Air Force is not alone in its battle against suicide. In 1999, the U.S. Surgeon General described suicide as a "serious pub-

lic health problem." Nearly 31,000 people commit suicide annually in the United States.

"The subject of suicide is very disconcerting for many people, but the first step toward preventing suicide is getting people to talk about it," Colonel Talcott said.



CMSAF addresses concerns

Continued from Page 2

will continue to receive the higher BAH rate until you move (PCS) or change your status. For example, a change in dependent status, or demotion would change your BAH rate, while a promotion will not cause your BAH to drop. Overall, rate protection will mitigate any loss in housing income for the vast majority of people.

Lastly, senior leaders are working for more improvements to housing compensation. Recently, Secretary of Defense William Cohen announced plans to reduce the out-of-pocket housing expense we collectively pay from an average of 18.8 percent this year to 15 percent next year. The secretary's goal is to eliminate (by the year 2005) the out-of-pocket for median rental costs throughout the United States.

The bottom line is this: Look at BAH in terms of your entire career and all the locations you may be assigned, as opposed to passing judgment on BAH based on a single line-item change to the table. Talk with your first sergeant, command chief master sergeant, or commander to find out the facts and standards used to determine BAH. Also, your housing experts can help you understand the true rental costs for your area. If you still have questions or concerns, please raise them through proper channels so we can get them resolved.

I hope that when you have all of the facts, you'll agree BAH was the right direction to take as we continue to find ways to improve housing for our military men and women. You can learn more on the Internet about the BAH program by going to www.dtic.mil/perdiem/bah.html which is designed to be a one-stop information source.

AF releases survey results

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satisfaction range.

The survey's quality of life section focused on Air Force priorities such as community programs, pay and retirement benefits, people and operations tempo, housing, educational opportunities and health care. Emphasis was also placed on more contemporary issues like readiness, retention and a sense of community.

The survey revealed that 54 percent of enlisted people and 62 percent of officers are satisfied with medical care, while 42 percent of enlisted families and 45 percent of officer families are satisfied with medical care. On housing, 71 percent of married enlisted people and 73 percent of single enlisted people are satisfied with current housing, while 83 percent of married officers and 85 percent of single officers are satisfied.

A sense of community at Air Force bases is important to 82 percent of officers, 70 percent of enlisted, and 73 percent of civilians. On the issue of quality of life at duty stations, 63 percent of enlisted, 75 percent of civilians and 77 percent of officers responded positively.

Regarding career intentions (whether or not to stay in the service, or undecided), 61 percent of enlisted and 68 percent of officers indicated plans to stay, while 81 percent of civilians plan to remain in DOD service. Education programs rank among the top five community programs that affect career intentions.

Between 63 percent and 76 percent of first- and second-term airmen and company grade officers indicated that a retirement plan where everyone received 50 percent of their base pay would increase the likelihood of them staying in for 20 years. Likewise, 59 percent of career airmen and 71 percent of field grade officers said the likelihood of serving 20 years or more increased with pay raises tied to cost of living.

According to survey results, there is still room for improvement in several areas, such as compensation (including housing allowances), health care services for family members, rising ops tempo, undermanning and dissatisfaction with leadership and supervision.

General Ryan said the significant pay and compensation gains made in the fiscal 2000 defense budget should help address some of the service members' concerns expressed in the survey.

In operations tempo, the number of days spent on temporary duty and the number of hours worked per week has increased steadily since 1995, according to survey results. Officers who reported TDYs now spend an average of 62 days per year TDY and work a 55-hour week, compared to an average of 50 days TDY and a 51-hour week in 1996.

For enlisted members who reported TDYs, the average number of days spent TDY increased by 22 days to 68 days, and the hours spent at work each week have risen from 46 in 1996 to 51 in 1999. Undermanning at the work center accounted for about 15 percent of the increased number of work hours.

Overall, compared to 1997, satisfaction in supervision, participation and involvement, and leadership fell by 2 or more percentage points across the board.

"I appreciate the participation by the Air Force family, and I'm satisfied with the process and the initial review of the data," said General Ryan. "It verified many of the things we already knew. It appears we've made progress in many areas, but we still have work to do, particularly with ops tempo, compensation concerns and health care."

"Air Force people spoke their minds in the survey," said General Ryan, "and Air Force leadership at all levels is listening and engaged in making the Air Force a better place to serve our nation."



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